

Offer to set up Utar 'valid for two years'

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THE offer to set up Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman is valid for two years, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamed said.

He said the company to which the offer was made had to fulfil several requirements before the university could be established.

"Once the ministry made an offer, we can say 75 per cent approval has been obtained. The most difficult part is the "offer stage". Once this is over, other stages like getting approval for courses will follow through," he said at Parliament lobby.

Earlier in the House, Musa told Chong Eng (DAP-Bukit Mertajam) that what's been done by the ministry was to make an offer for the establishment of Utar.

"They must have the ability and the track record. In the case involving Utar, the track record is the successful management of Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman."

On why a new private university was being set up instead of Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman being upgraded into a full-pledged university, Musa said since 50 per cent of its funds came from the Government, it would become a public higher institution of learning if upgraded into a university.

On the concerns raised by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently that children in kindergartens were exposed to pornographic materials, Musa said the relevant department would be directed to look into the matter.

On reports of the emergence of occult groups spreading anti-God philosophy, Musa said he had contacted National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Seri Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman for more details.

Zaharah was reported as saying that the group had recruited members as young as 10 years old.